A (Lighter than usual) UQ Assessment Brief on “Authentic assessment”

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As everyone seems rather busy at the moment – often because they are in the middle of end of semester assessment - I hope the sample exam paper below will help you appreciate assessment’s lighter side. It’s been around for some time but still quite amusing – especially if you haven’t seen it before. If you have any additional examples along the same line, please send them to me.


You enter a classroom, with one desk, one very large seat, and a test and a pencil on the desk. You are being completely assessed.

Read each question thoroughly. Answer all questions. Time limit: four hours. Begin immediately.

HISTORY: Describe the history of religion from its origins to the present day, concentrate specifically but not exclusively, on its social, political, economic, religious, and philosophical impact on Europe, Asia, America and Africa. Demonstrate your understanding by creating your own religion and describing its likely impact on world affairs. Be brief, concise and specific.

LITERATURE: Compose an epic poem based on the events of your own life in which you see and footnote allusions from T.S. Eliot, Keats, Chaucer, Dante, Norse mythology and the Marx brothers. Critique your poem with a full discussion of its metrics.

MUSIC: Write a piano concerto. Orchestrate it and perform it with flute and drum. You will find a piano under your seat.

MEDICINE: You have been provided with a razor blade, a piece of gauze, and a bottle of Scotch. Remove your own appendix. Do not suture until your work has been inspected. You have fifteen minutes.

BIOLOGY: Create life. Estimate the differences in subsequent human culture if this form of life had developed five hundred years earlier, with special attention to the probable effects on the English Parliamentary system. Prove your thesis.

PSYCHOLOGY: Employing principles from the major schools of psychoanalytic thought, successfully subject yourself to analysis. Make appropriate personality changes, bill yourself and fill out all medical insurance forms. Now do the same to the person seated to your immediate left.

ECONOMICS: Develop a realistic plan for refinancing the national debt. Run for Congress. Build a political power base. Successfully pass your plan and implement it.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: 2,500 riot-crazed students are storming the classroom. Calm them. You may use any ancient language except Latin or Greek.
PHYSICS: Explain the general theory of relativity. Keep it simple. Now demonstrate the limits of faster-than-light travel through an experiment of your own design.

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE: Outline the steps involved in breeding your own super high yield, all weather hybrid strain of wheat. Describe its chemical and physical properties and estimate its impact on world food supplies. Construct a model for dealing with world-wide surpluses. Write your Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

MATHEMATICS: Give today's date, in metric.

CHEMISTRY: Transform lead into gold. You will find a beaker and three lead sinkers under your seat. Show all work including Feynman diagrams and quantum functions for all steps. You have fifteen minutes.

POLITICAL SCIENCE: There is a red telephone on the desk behind you. Start World War III. Report at length on its socio-political effects, if any.

** EXTRA CREDIT **

Define the Universe. Give two examples.


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